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GENERAL DEBATE

Letter dated 14 October 1994 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I am writing to you concerning the statement of Alfred Serreqi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania, made on 4 October 1994, in the general debate of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly (see A/49/PV.17) and, upon instructions of my Government, I have the honour to inform you of the following.

Minister Serreqi's statement is extremely unusual in international relations, since its major part constitutes a gross interference in the internal affairs of, and false accusations against, Albania's two neighbours - the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Greece.

This is Minister Serreqi's latest contribution to the continued unfounded anti-Yugoslav campaign and represents a series of unsubstantiated attacks on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Greece for their allegedly coordinated activity against Albania and destabilization of the Balkans. Without providing any arguments, the Albanian Minister resorted to the most serious disqualifications, quite unusual in international communications. In his statement, Minister Serreqi displayed the aggressiveness and militancy of which he accuses others.

Albania's totally senseless accusations cannot disguise the true essence of its policy towards its neighbours - flagrant interference in internal affairs by instigating disloyalty of the Albanian minority against the legal authorities of the countries in which they live. Minister Serreqi also obviously intended to conceal the difficult economic and political situation in Albania and to ensure, in the context of the resolution of the Yugoslav crisis, international support for the never-abandoned ambition of the Albanian leaders to create "Greater Albania".

The verbal declarations would have to match the facts.

Minister Serreqi declared that Albania would like to have "peace, good-neighbourliness and fruitful cooperation with Montenegro and Serbia".

First of all, Mr. Serreqi should be aware of the fact that the Republics of Serbia and Montenegro are constituent parts of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. "Good-neighbourliness" implies true respect of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the Helsinki Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and international law and practice and primarily of the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other sovereign States.

By pursuing a policy of confrontation with all its neighbours and causing border incidents, Albania is creating tensions in the region and poses a direct threat to peace and stability in the Balkans.

Apparently, Albania only verbally declares itself in favour of the development of democracy, human rights and freedoms, the rule of law and the maintenance of friendly relations with its neighbours in "the climate of good understanding and cooperation". However, it is widely known that nothing of this exists in Albania in practice. Instead, political opponents and free-thinking journalists are prosecuted; national minority members have been denied their rights and subjected to various forms of intimidation; their fundamental freedoms, such as the right to private property and the right to choose freely the place of residence, are denied; staged political trials are frequent, etc. For this reason, the United Nations Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, the Council of Europe and the European Parliament recently adopted relevant resolutions calling for strict respect of human and minority rights by Albania.

Minister Serreqi's accusations that Yugoslavia is responsible for instigating a bloody war in violation of the principles of the Helsinki Final Act and for the dismemberment of Bosnia and Herzegovina "in the name of making hegemony - seeking Greater Serbia" are outrageous.

False allegations against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia cannot veil the widely recognized true character of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is a civil, inter-ethnic and inter-religious war waged between its three constituent peoples. Denying the legitimate rights of any of the three peoples cannot lead to the solution of the crisis, peace and stability in the region, but only to the prolongation of the conflict and further destabilization.

Minister Serreqi said that "the Serb nationalism launched an aggression in the north and war to create Greater Serbia by applying a real holocaust at the end of this century against the Bosnian people and strengthening apartheid in Kosovo".

Minister Serreqi has obviously deliberately overlooked the fact that the Serbs are indigenous people living in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Krajina for centuries. The historical truth is that it was exactly the Serbs from those areas who have been subjected to one of the most tragic holocausts and policies

of extermination pursued by the Nazi-puppet State of Croatia during the Second World War that encompassed most of the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina as well.

False and ill-intentioned accusations that Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia are responsible for the dismemberment of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the civil war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the crisis in the Balkans are aimed at slowing down and preventing the process of the peaceful resolution of the Yugoslav crisis.

In his statement, Minister Serreqi, by raising the question of Kosovo and Metohija as the key problem in the crisis, repeatedly displayed open territorial claims against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The sole problem of Kosovo and Metohija is one of the illegal separatist policy of leading political parties of the Albanian minority, supported and instigated by the expansionist policy of the leadership of the Republic of Albania. Guided by such policy, Albania is the only country in the world that recognized the non-existent "Republic of Kosovo" and opened an office of its separatist leadership in Tirana.

Kosovo and Metohija is and will remain an integral part of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Serbia and any attempt at its illegal and forcible secession would meet a legitimate and adequate response.

Full respect of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia by Albania is a precondition for good-neighbourly relations between the two States.

While the Albanian minority in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is fully guaranteed the highest standard of protection of human and minority rights provided for by the Charter of the United Nations, the CSCE Helsinki Final Act and other international instruments, the respect of human and minority rights in Albania lags far behind.

Minister Serreqi declared that Albania has supported and does support the request of the Muslim leadership of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the lifting of the arms embargo.

A true policy of peace means less arms, less killing, less destruction. Supporting the opposite could not mean anything else but opting for a military instead of a peaceful solution for the civil war in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Albania is also against the decision on the partial suspension of the sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, thus opposing the decision of the Security Council, which recognized Yugoslavia's constructive and peaceful policy and its contribution to reaching a just and lasting peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the interest of all its constituent peoples.

Minister Serreqi stated that the crisis in the former Yugoslavia started in Kosovo.

The truth is that the first ever policy of ethnic cleansing in the territory of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia actually started with the exodus from Kosovo and Metohija of the Serbs and the Montenegrins who were forced to leave their centuries-old homes under the pressure of the Albanian extremists in order to create an ethnically pure Albanian entity. That policy has been and still is very much supported by the Republic of Albania as a part of its territorial aspirations towards the Yugoslav territory.

The authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Serbia stand ready to engage in an open dialogue with the leaders of the political parties of the Albanian minority in Kosovo and Metohija to find solutions to the outstanding questions, within the legal institutions. The precondition is that the Albanian national minority, as all other citizens in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, respect the constitutional system and demonstrate loyalty to the State in which they live - the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Serbia.

There is no doubt that the main goal of Minister Serreqi's statement was an attempt to discredit the peace policy of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The Albanian leadership clearly opposes the position of key international factors that Kosovo and Metohija constitute an integral part of Serbia and Yugoslavia. Even more, it insists on conditioning the lifting of the sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia with the solution of some totally unrelated issues, which is absolutely unacceptable.

Minister Serreqi grossly attacked the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia at the moment when Yugoslavia was expecting Albania's reply to a number of proposals for a dialogue and to its initiative for a meeting between the two Foreign Ministers in New York. Instead, Minister Serreqi stated from the rostrum of the General Assembly that "the relations between the two countries will be frozen" pending the resolution of the Yugoslav crisis. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia can only deplore such an attitude on the part of Albania, which does not contribute to the normalization of mutual relations.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia wishes to have good relations with all its neighbours, including Albania, which is expected to discontinue its interference in Yugoslavia's internal affairs, to withhold support to the separatist leadership of the Albanian minority in Kosovo and Metohija and to give up its territorial claims towards Yugoslavia. Only in this way is it possible to establish good-neighbourly relations and cooperation between Yugoslavia and Albania in the interest of promoting peace and stability in the Balkans.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 9.

(Signed) Dragomir DJOKIC
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.